



U.S. EMBASSY, YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON

PRESS RELEASE



United States Supports Clean Energy Access in Cameroon

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Today, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) announced it has funded a feasibility study to connect more than 100,000 households in rural Cameroon to solar-powered minigrids that will utilize innovative battery storage technology. The Cameroonian grantee, Renewable Energy Innovators Cameroon (REIc), is working on the project in partnership with SimpliPhi Power, a California-based provider of energy storage systems. This is USTDA's first minigrid activity in Cameroon.

“This project illustrates how USTDA is tackling the climate crisis by engaging both overseas partners and U.S. industry to deliver clean energy solutions to underserved communities,” said Enoch T. Ebong, USTDA's Acting Director. “USTDA's engagement in REIc's ambitious project will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of Cameroonians. For U.S. companies, our engagement will help them enter a new market and supply the technologies that will be needed to build these minigrids across the country.”

Under USTDA's grant, SimpliPhi Power will conduct the technical, regulatory, financial and legal analyses necessary to develop up to 134 solar-powered minigrids. SimpliPhi will execute the feasibility study in collaboration with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, a national laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy, and Virginia-based Morua Power. The study will also include the design and monitoring of a minigrid pilot project.

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U.S. Chargé d’Affaires in Cameroon, Vernelle Trim FitzPatrick, said: “We are proud that American companies will be part of developing new solutions to meet Cameroon’s energy needs. Such partnership creates synergy for flexible, sustainable, and locally tailored results. This is just one of the many ways the United States is partnering to support Cameroon’s prosperity, security, and development.”

Jude Numfor, Managing Director of REIc, noted: “With several years of extensive research and piloting of minigrids in Cameroon, USTDA’s assistance comes at a critical time, as it will mature our plans to provide access to electricity to more than 760 off-grid villages in Cameroon in the next few years. Thanks to our partnership with USTDA, REIc is better positioned to achieve its mission of making available clean and affordable electricity as a tool to faster sustainable development.”

Jesse Gerstin, Director of Sustainable Business Development for SimpliPhi Power, remarked: “SimpliPhi is excited to work with organizations that share our commitment to delivering energy access for communities that will benefit most. As a mission-driven U.S. manufacturer and leader in sustainable energy storage technology, we believe that access to clean and affordable energy is fundamental to economic growth, social equity, and environmental responsibility, and look forward to supporting REIc in leading this rural electrification initiative in Cameroon.”

Power Africa Coordinator Mark Carrato added: "Over the past two years, Power Africa has worked closely with Cameroon's Ministry of Water Resources and Energy and Cameroon's energy regulatory agency, ARSEL, to streamline minigrid licensing procedures and increase private sector participation in the country's blossoming minigrid sector. Our collaborative efforts are contributing to an improved enabling environment for private investment, opening up new opportunities for qualified minigrid developers and equipment suppliers including U.S. manufacturers. This

feasibility study represents another important milestone for rural energy access in Cameroon.”

USTDA now has a global portfolio of 20 minigrid activities that are deploying innovative Made-in-America solutions to address energy access and security in remote and underserved areas in emerging markets.

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The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project preparation and partnership building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.